

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07
LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 INT-05 AF-10 ARA-14 EA-12
NEA-10 OES-07 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 /132 W
-----117811 020704Z /16

R 011714Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2670
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BELFAST
AMCONSUL EDINBURGH

UNCLAS LONDON 01749

USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY
USOECN ALSO FOR EMBASSY
DEPARTMENT PASS LABOR

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB
SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNITED MINEWORKERS'
STRIKE.

IN RESPONSE TO UNITED MINEWORKERS' REQUEST, THE MINERS'
INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION HAS ASKED ITS 34 AFFILIATES
IN 32 COUNTRIES TO PUBLICIZE THEIR
SOLIDARITY WITH THE UNITED MINEWORKERS. OFFICIALS OF
THE BRITISH NATIONAL UNION OF MINEWORKERS (NUM) SAY
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THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ASKED BY THE UMWA FOR FINANCIAL
SUPPORT BUT STAND READY TO PROVIDE IT OUT OF GRATITUDE
FOR ASSISTANCE UMW GAVE DURING 1977 BRITISH MINERS'
STRIKE. NUM HAS ISSUED FOLLOWING STATEMENT: QUOTE -
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COAL MINERS' STRIKE - THE
BRITISH MINERS' EXPRESS THEIR WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT
AND SOLIDARITY WITH THEIR AMERICAN COLLEAGUES, AND

THE N.U.M. HAVE ASKED THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA WHAT HELP AND ASSISTANCE THEY CAN GIVE TO THEM IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO REDUCE HEALTH AND SAFETY HAZARDS IN THE MINES AND FOR IMPROVEMENTS IN PAY AND CONDITIONS

THE 160,000 MEMBERS OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA, EMPLOYED IN THE UNITED STATES BITUMINOUS COAL INDUSTRY, HAVE BEEN ON STRIKE SINCE THE 6TH DECEMBER 1977, WHEN THEIR THREE YEARS CONTRACT EXPIRED: AT WHICH TIME THE EMPLOYERS HAD OFFERED NO WAGE INCREASE, BUT HAD PUT FORWARD PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD HAVE DESTROYED THE HEALTH AND RETIREMENT BENEFIT FUNDS, FORCE THE UMWA TO ACT AS A STRIKE-BREAKER AGAINST ITS OWN MEMBERS, AND SEVERELY PUNISH WORKERS WHO TOOK PART IN ANY STRIKE OR WERE ABSENT FROM WORK FOR EVEN ONE DAY WITHOUT THE EMPLOYERS AUTHORIZATION.

IN THE PAST 10 YEARS THE U.S. COAL MINERS HOURLY WAGE RATES HAVE INCREASED BY 160 PERCENT, WHILST CAR WORKERS RATES ROSE BY 246 PERCENT AND STEEL WORKERS BY 234.9 PERCENT. DURING THOSE 10 YEARS 2,000 U.S. MINE WORKERS WERE KILLED, EMPHASISING THAT IT IS THE MOST DANGEROUS OCCUPATION. COAL PRICES IN THE UNITED STATES INCREASED FROM 4.99 DOLLARS PER TON IN 1969 TO 21.50 DOLLARS PER TON IN 1977. HOWEVER, LABOUR COSTS PER TON REPRESENTED 53.5 PERCENT IN 1969 AND ARE NOW ONLY 35 PERCENT. PROFITS PER TON HAVE SHOWN GREAT INCREASES DURING THIS PERIOD.

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AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MINE WORKERS OF AMERICA SAID, THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE INCREASING WEALTH OF THE COAL INDUSTRY TO BE REFLECTED IN THE LIVE OF THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO MAKE THAT WEALTH POSSIBLE -- THOSE WHO TAKE THE RISKS NECESSARY TO PRODUCE COAL.

THE BRITISH MINeworkERS ARE SOLIDLY BEHIND THE AMERICAN MINERS AND ARE READY TO SUPPORT THEM FULLY IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THEIR RIGHTFUL OBJECTIVES.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LOBBYING, LABOR STRIKES, MINING INDUSTRY, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LONDON01749
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780049-0830
Format: TEL
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197802107/aaaadmlc.tel
Line Count: 105
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 736e08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3444452
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UNITED MINEWORKERS' STRIKE. IN RESPONSE TO UNITED MINEWORKERS' REQUEST, THE MI
TAGS: ELAB, US, MINERS INTL FEDN, UMW
To: STATE USEEC MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/736e08ce-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014